

Research Paper

## Effectiveness of Mindful Parenting Education on Emotion Regulation and Behavioral Inhibition in Parents with Anxious Children

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**How to Cite this Article:**

Badiiee E, Amirfakhraei A, Samavi A, Mohammadi K. Effectiveness of Mindful Parenting Education on Emotion Regulation and Behavioral Inhibition in Parents with Anxious Children. *Iranian Journal of Rehabilitation Research in Nursing*. 2021;7(3):65-75.

**DOI:** [10.52547/ijrn-07037](https://doi.org/10.52547/ijrn-07037)

**Received:** 24 Oct 2020

**Accepted:** 29 Jan 2021

**Keywords:**

Anxious  
Behavioral Inhibition  
Emotion Regulation  
Mindful Parenting

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Rehabilitation Research in Nursing

**Abstract**

**Introduction:** Anxiety is one of the most common psychological disorders that cause problems in emotion regulation and behavioral inhibition. One way to improve parents' psychological characteristics with psychological disorders, including anxiety, is mindful parenting education. This study aimed to determine the effectiveness of conscious parenting education on emotion regulation and behavioral inhibition in parents with anxious children.

**Methods:** Present study was semi-experimental with a pretest and post-test design with the control group. The research population was parents with anxious children of Larestan city in the year 2019. Several 40 people were selected by the available sampling method and randomly replaced into two equal groups (each group of 20 people). The experimental group trained eight sessions of 90 minutes with the mindful parenting method, and the control group didn't receive any education. The research instrument was the Spence & et al. preschool anxiety Scale (PAS), Garnefski & Kraaij emotion regulation questionnaire (ERQ), and Gladstone & Parker behaviorally inhibited temperament style questionnaire (BITSQ). Data were analyzed with statistical tests and appropriate software.

**Results:** The findings showed that the experimental and control groups didn't significantly differ in terms of education, age, and the number of children ( $P>0.05$ ). Also, the groups in the pretest phase didn't have a significant difference in terms of positive and negative emotion regulation and behavioral inhibition ( $P>0.05$ ). Still, in the post-test, a phase has a substantial difference in all three variables ( $P<0.001$ ). In other words, mindful parenting education led to increased positive emotion regulation and decreased negative emotion regulation and behavioral inhibition in parents with anxious children ( $P<0.001$ ).

**Conclusions:** The results indicated the effectiveness of mindful parenting education on improving emotion regulation and behavioral inhibition in parents with anxious children. Therefore, using the aware parenting education method and other educational methods suggested improving psychological characteristics, especially emotion regulation and behavioral inhibition in parents with anxious children.

## Extended Abstract

### OBJECTIVE

Anxiety is one of the most common psychological disorders that accounting for 31% of the total cost of psychological illness [1]. Anxiety includes severe worry about several events for at least six months, dysfunction

in social and occupational, and inability to control anxiety [3]. Parents of anxious children show more difficulty in emotion regulation [4] and behavioral inhibition [7]. Emotion regulation means managing

emotional information stimulated through physical, behavioral, and cognitive processes that empowered people to regulate, experience, and express emotion and improve health and quality of life [5]. Also, behavioral inhibition is a multidimensional structure and a natural and vulnerable factor in the occurrence of psychological disorders such as anxiety [8] and means a constant pattern of avoidant and withdrawn behaviors and emotional responses in unfamiliar situations or stranger people [9]. Mindful parenting education is one of the most effective methods to improve parents' psychological characteristics with psychological disorders (including anxiety) [11]. Mindful parenting is applying the mindfulness method to improve parenting by enhancing the quality of parental attention, increasing awareness of parental stressors, reducing parental responsiveness, and increasing parenting self-efficacy [15]. Therefore, this study aimed to determine the effectiveness of mindful parenting education on emotion regulation and behavioral inhibition in parents with anxious children.

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

The present research method was semi-experimental with a pretest and post-test design with experimental and control groups. This research's research population was parents with anxious children of Larestan city in the year 2019. From between 40 people after reviewing the inclusion criteria to study were selected by the available sampling method and randomly replaced into two equal groups (each group 20 people). The experimental group trained eight sessions of 90 minutes (one session per week) with a mindful parenting method by a clinical psychologist with a degree of conscious parenting. The control group was replaced on the waiting list for training. After

expressing ethical considerations (principles of secrecy, the confidentiality of personal information, privacy of the subjects, etc.) and receive from of consent conscious participation in research the research firm to collect data use from specifications demographic form, Spence & et al. preschool anxiety scale (PAS), Garnefski & Kraaij emotion regulation questionnaire (ERQ) and Gladstone & Parker behaviorally inhibited temperament style questionnaire (BITSQ). In the present study, the reliability was calculated by Cronbach's alpha coefficients for preschool anxiety, positive emotion regulation, negative emotion regulation, and behavioral inhibition in the parents of anxious children 0.90, 0.79, 0.85, and 0.84, respectively. Data were analyzed with the chi-square, independent t-test, and multivariate analysis of covariance (MANCOVA) statistical tests in SPSS-19 software at a significant level of  $P < 0.05$ .

## RESULTS

The findings showed no significant difference between the experimental and control groups in terms of education, age, and the number of children ( $P > 0.05$ ). Also, there was no significant difference between the experimental and control groups in the pretest stage in terms of positive emotion regulation, negative emotion regulation, and behavioral inhibition ( $P > 0.05$ ). Still, there was a significant difference between the mentioned groups in the post-test stage in terms of all three variables of positive emotion regulation, negative emotion regulation, and behavioral inhibition ( $P < 0.05$ ) (Table 1). In other words, a mindful parenting education program led to significantly increased positive emotion regulation and decreased negative emotion regulation and behavioral inhibition in parents of anxious children ( $P < 0.001$ ) (Table 2).

Table 1. T-Test Results

Stag Variables es	Experimental Group M±SD	Control Group M±SD	P-Value
<b>Positive emotion regulation</b>			
Pre-test	23.94±3.51	24.91±4.02	0.43
Post-test	31.76±3.06	24.63±3.50	0.001
<b>Positive emotion regulation</b>			
Pre-test	17.30±4.05	18.33±2.70	0.51
Post-test	12.66±3.42	19.51±3.34	0.001
<b>Behavioral inhibition</b>			
Pre-test	32.10±7.17	33.45±6.57	0.39
Post-test	24.66±5.83	32.68±6.59	0.001

Table 2: MANCOVA Results

Variables	Source	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Squares	F	P-Value	Eta Squared	Test Power
<b>Positive emotion regulation</b>	Group	509.08	1	509.08	58.38	0.001	0.77	0.83
<b>Negative emotion regulation</b>	Group	471.11	1	471.11	36.49	0.001	0.71	0.82
<b>Behavioral inhibition</b>	Group	815.23	1	815.23	21.87	0.001	0.65	0.79

## CONCLUSION

The results indicated the effectiveness of mindful parenting education on improving emotion regulation and behavioral inhibition in parents with anxious children. Due to the high prevalence of anxious children and their parents' problems and

considering that mindful parenting education program is a relatively cheap, practical, and effective method, it can improve psychological characteristics. Therefore, using an aware parenting education method and other educational methods suggested improving psychological factors,

especially emotion regulation and behavioral inhibition in parents with anxious children.

**Ethical Considerations**

In this study, ethical points according to the ethical protocols of Helsinki studies were done and received moral code from Islamic Azad University of BandarAbbas branch with several IR.IAUBandarAbbas.REC.1398.39. Also, the research consent form was signed by all participants.

**Funding of Supports**

This research was conducted without any financial support and performed at the expense of the authors.

**Author's Contribution**

Ms. Elham Badiee was responsible for writing the proposal, data collection, and initial writing of the article, and Ms. Azita Amirfakhraei and Mr. Abdolvahab Samavi, and Mr. Kouros Mohammedi were responsible for data analysis and final report of the article, submission, and correction of the article.

**Conflict of Interest**

There is no conflict of interest between the authors of the present study.

**Applicable Remarks**

Regarding the high and increasing prevalence of anxiety and psychological problems of anxious children and their parents, including difficulties in emotion regulation and behavioral inhibition of parents, a mindful parenting education program was able to increase positive emotion regulation and decrease negative emotion regulation and behavioral inhibition. Therefore, therapists and health experts can use this research as a new perspective to enhance health indicators and even prevent them in parents of anxious children. As a result, mindful parenting education in the health and care policies related to chronic and progressive diseases such as anxiety can play an essential role in improving their psychological traits of parents of anxious children.

**Acknowledgments**

At this moment, thank the officials of the Larestan Education Department and preschool principals and participants in the research.